DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

Guns, tanks, and bombs were the principal weapons of World War II, but there were other, more subtle forms of warfare. Words, posters, and films waged a constant battle for the hearts and minds of the U.S. citizenry as military weapons engaged the enemy. Persuading the U.S. public became a wartime industry, almost as important as the manufacturing of bullets and planes. The U.S. government launched an aggressive propaganda campaign to galvanize public support, and some of the nation's foremost intellectuals, artists, and film makers became warriors on that front. This lesson plan for using primary sources is intended to take one to two class periods for completion. The lesson plan presents 33 World War II posters for students to analyze. The teaching activities address history and civics standards correlations; offers a detailed procedure for presenting the lesson; and suggests a follow-up activity. A poster analysis worksheet is attached. (BT)

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TEACHING WITH DOCUMENTS

Powers of Persuasion – Poster Art of World War II

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Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan:

Powers of Persuasion - Poster Art of World War II

Background

Guns, tanks, and bombs were the principal weapons of World War II, but there were other, more subtle, forms of warfare as well. Words, posters, and films waged a constant battle for the hearts and minds of the American citizenry just as surely as military weapons engaged the enemy. Persuading the American public became a wartime industry, almost as important as the manufacturing of bullets and planes. The Government launched an aggressive propaganda campaign to galvanize public support, and some of the nation's foremost intellectuals, artists, and film makers became warriors on that front.

Time required:

One to two class periods

Objective:

To analyze poster art of World War II.

The Documents

Posters from the Powers of Persuasion exhibit in the Online Exhibit Hall
http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_home.html

Document 1 – Man the Guns! – Man the Guns – Join the Navy

Document 2 – Man the Guns! - Keep 'Em Fighting

Document 3 – Man the Guns! - Get Hot, Keep Moving (on the back of this print is inscribed "Bridgeport Brass".

Document 4 – It's a Woman's War Too - Victory Waits on Your Fingers

Document 5 – It's a Woman's War Too – Longing Won't Bring Him Back Sooner. . . Get a War Job

Document 6 – It's a Woman's War Too – We Can Do It!

Document 7 – United We Win – United We Win

Document 8 – United We Win – Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

Document 9 – United We Win – Private Joe Louis says _

Document 10 – Use it Up, Wear it Out – Waste Helps the Enemy

Document 11 – Use it Up, Wear it Out – When You Ride Alone You Ride with Hitler!

Document 12 – Use it Up, Wear it Out – Save Waste Fats for Explosives

Document 13 – Four Freedoms – Save Freedom of Speech

Document 14 – Four Freedoms – Save Freedom of Worship

Document 15 – Four Freedoms – Ours...to Fight for – Freedom from Want

Document 16 – Four Freedoms – Ours...to Fight for – Freedom from Fear

Document 17 – Warning! Our Homes are in Danger Now! - Warning! Our Homes are in Danger Now

Document 18 - Warning! Our Homes are in Danger Now! – Keep These Hands Off

Document 19 - Warning! Our Homes are in Danger Now! – Don't Let that Shadow Touch Them

Document 20 - Warning! Our Homes are in Danger Now! – We're Fighting to Prevent This

Document 21 – This is Nazi Brutality – This is Nazi Brutality

Document 22 – This is Nazi Brutality – We French Workers Warn You . . .

Document 23 – This is Nazi Brutality – The Sowers

Document 24 – He's Watching You – He's Watching You

Document 25 – He's Watching You – Someone Talked!

Document 26 – He's Watching You – ...Because Somebody Talked!

Document 27 - He's Watching You – Wanted! For Murder

Document 28 – He Knew the Meaning of Sacrifice – You Talk of Sacrifice . . .

Document 29 - He Knew the Meaning of Sacrifice – Have You Really Tried to Save Gas by Getting into a Car Club?

Document 30 - He Knew the Meaning of Sacrifice – Miles of Hell to Tokyo!

Document 31 – Stamp 'Em Out! - Stamp 'Em Out

Document 32 - Stamp 'Em Out – Crack the Axis

Document 33 - Stamp 'Em Out – More Production

Lesson Resources

Standards Correlations

Teaching Activities

Poster Analysis Worksheet

Page URL: http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion.html

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Teaching Activities

Standards Correlations

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for United States History.

- Era 8 - The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)
  - Standard 3C: Demonstrate understanding of the effects of World War II at home.
  - Standards in Historical Thinking 3 and 5: Historical Analysis and Interpretation and Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-making.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

- Standard V. E. 1: Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the relationship between politics and the attainment of individual and public goals.

Procedures

1. Make copies of each of the posters and the poster analysis worksheet.
2. Divide the class into 11 groups. Give each group three posters to analyze and the poster analysis worksheet.
3. Allow student groups 15 to 20 minutes to read and analyze their posters. Ask them to complete the poster analysis worksheet and then determine whether their poster sought to motivate the viewer by instilling patriotism, confidence, and a positive outlook, or whether it sought to ward off complacency with grim, unromantic visions of war.
4. Ask a volunteer from each group to describe the content of the group's poster for the class and identify the issues mentioned or implied within.
5. Lead a discussion using the analysis worksheet and the following questions as a guide:
   - What are the similarities and differences between the posters?
   - Where do you think these posters were hung?
   - What emotions do these posters prompt?

Follow up

Encourage students to create their own World War II poster intended to galvanize public support for the war effort.

Page URL: http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/powers_of_persuasion/teaching_activities.html

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Document 1

Man the GUNS

Join the **NAVY**

Man the Guns—Join the Navy

by McClelland Barclay, 1942

Produced for the Navy Recruiting Bureau
NARA Still Picture Branch (NWDNS-44-PA-24)

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Document 2

Keep 'Em Fighting

NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-1171B)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 3

Get Hot—Keep Moving

NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-179-WP-1256)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 4

VICTORY WAITS
ON YOUR FINGERS—
KEEP 'EM FLYING, MISS U.S.A.
UNCLE SAM NEEDS STENOGRAPHERS! - GET CIVIL SERVICE INFORMATION AT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE
U.S. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Victory Waits on Your Fingers

Produced by the
Royal Typewriter Company
for the U.S. Civil Service Commission
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-2272)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 5

Longing won't bring him back sooner...

GET A WAR JOB!

SEE YOUR U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

War Manpower Commission

Longing Won't Bring Him Back Sooner . . .
Get a War Job!

by Lawrence Wilbur, 1944

Printed by the
Government Printing Office for the War
Manpower Commission
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-389)

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Document 6

We Can Do It!

by J. Howard Miller

Of all the images of working women during World War II, the image of women in factories predominates. Rosie the Riveter--the strong, competent woman dressed in overalls and bandanna--was introduced as a symbol of patriotic womanhood. The accoutrements of war work--uniforms, tools, and lunch pails--were incorporated into the revised image of the feminine ideal.

Produced by Westinghouse
for the War Production Co-Ordinating Committee
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-179-WP-1563)

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Document 7

United We Win

Photograph by Alexander Liberman, 1943

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the War Manpower Commission
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-370)

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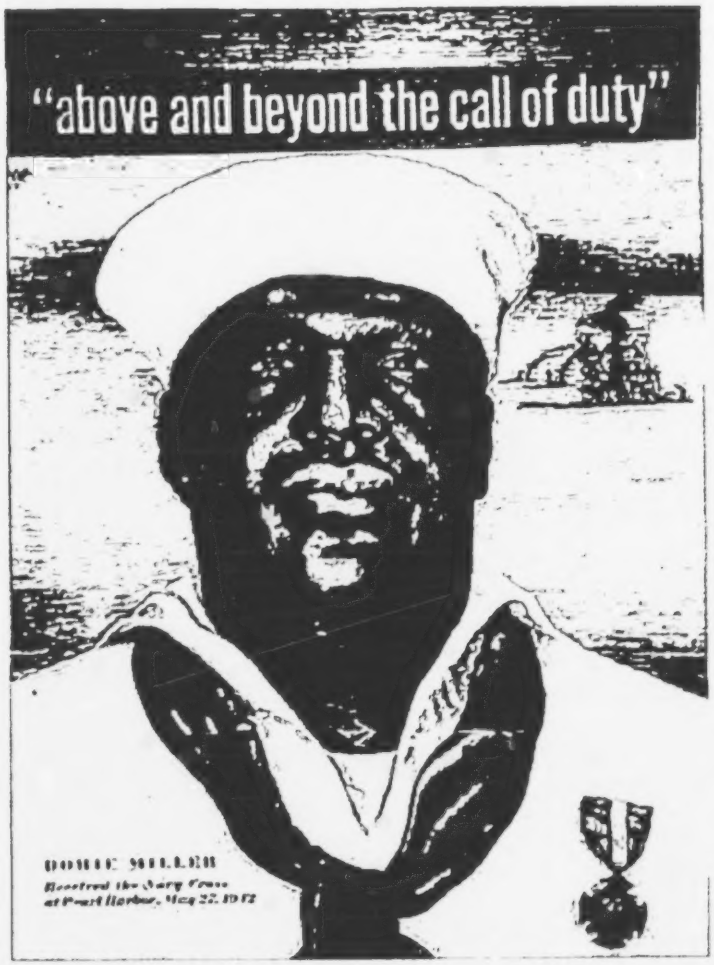
Document 8



Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

by David Stone Martin

At the beginning of the war, African Americans could join the Navy but could serve only as messmen.

Doris ("Dorie") Miller joined the Navy and was in service on board the U.S.S. *West Virginia* during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Restricted to the position of messman, he received no gunnery training. But during the attack, at great personal risk, he manned the weapon of a fallen gunman and succeeded in hitting Japanese planes. He was awarded the Navy Cross, but only after persistent pressure from the black press

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-68)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 9

Private Joe Louis
Says--

NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-87)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 10

Waste Helps the Enemy

by Vanderlaan

During the war years, gasoline, rubber, sugar, butter, and meat were rationed. Government publicity reminded people that shortages of these materials occurred because they were going to the troops, and that civilians should take part in conservation and salvage campaigns.

Produced by the
Douglas Aircraft Company
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-79-WP-103)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 11

When You Ride Alone
You Ride With Hitler!

by Weimer Pursell, 1943

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of Price Administration
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-188-PP-42)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 12

Save Waste Fats for Explosives

by Henry Koerner, 1943

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-380)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 13

SAVE FREEDOM OF SPEECH

BUY WAR BONDS

Save Freedom of Speech

By Norman Rockwell
©1943 SEPS: The Curtis Publishing Co., Agent

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-44)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 14

Save Freedom of Worship

By Norman Rockwell
©1943 SEPS: The Curtis Publishing Co., Agent

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-43)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 15

Ours...to fight for--Freedom From Want

By Norman Rockwell
©1943 SEPS: The Curtis Publishing Co., Agent

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-45)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 16

OURS...to fight for

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Ours...to fight for—Freedom From Fear

By Norman Rockwell
©1943 SEPS: The Curtis Publishing Co., Agent

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-46)

Document 17

WARNING! Our Homes Are in Danger Now!

Produced by the General Motors Corporation, 1942
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-2314)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 18

Keep These Hands Off!

by G. K. Odell

A study of commercial posters undertaken by the U.S. Government found that images of women and children in danger were effective emotional devices. The Canadian poster at right was part of the study and served as a model for American posters, such as the one below, that adopted a similar visual theme.

How to Make Posters That Will Help Win the War, Office of Facts and Figures

NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-97)

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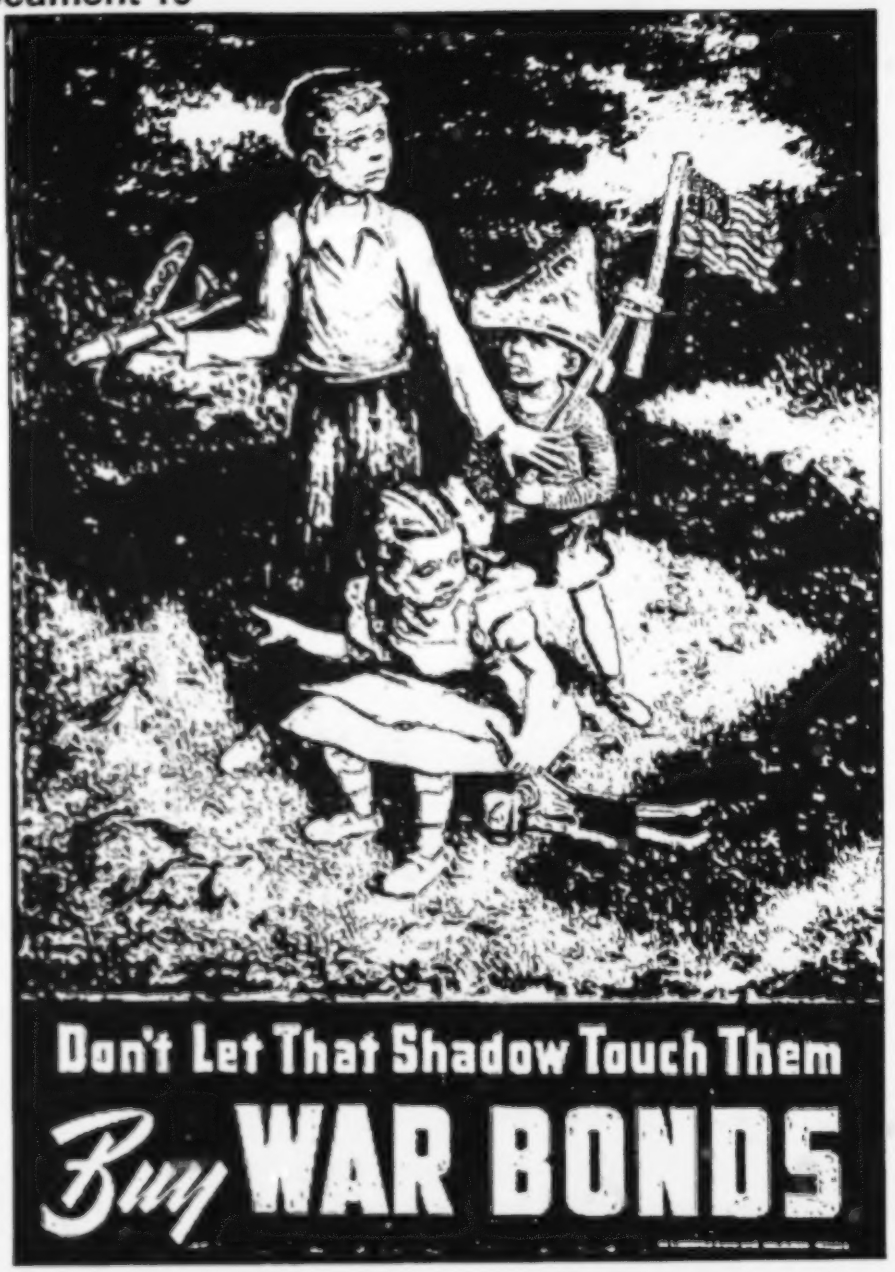
Document 19



Don`t Let That Shadow Touch Them

by Lawrence B. Smith, 1942

Produced for the Government Printing Office for the U.S. Treasury
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-97)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 20

We're Fighting to Prevent This

by C. R. Miller

Think America Institute, Kelly Read & Co.
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-2376)

National Archives and Records Administration

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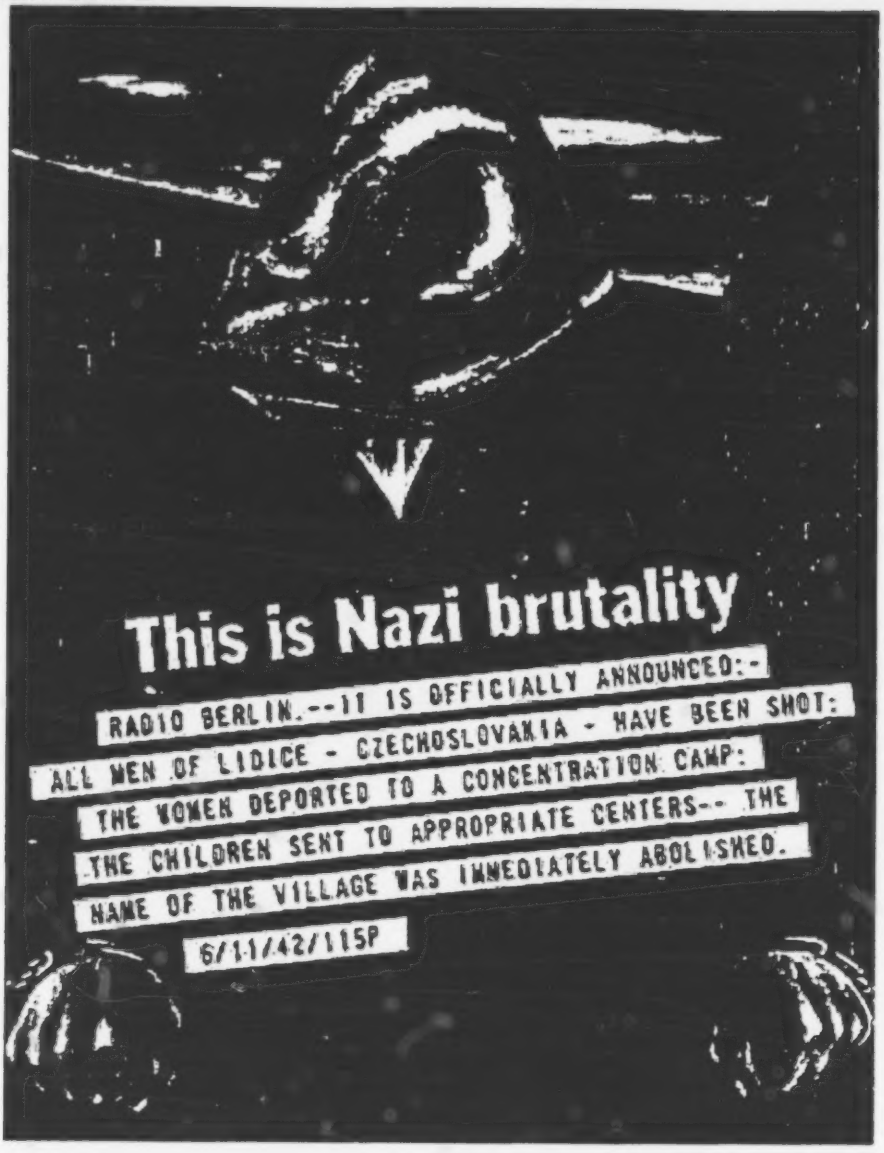
Document 21


This is Nazi brutality
RADIO BERLIN.--IT IS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED:-
ALL MEN OF LIDICE - CZECHOSLOVAKIA - HAVE BEEN SHOT:
THE WOMEN DEPORTED TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP:
THE CHILDREN SENT TO APPROPRIATE CENTERS-- THE
NAME OF THE VILLAGE WAS IMMEDIATELY ABOLISHED.
6/11/42/115P

This is Nazi Brutality

by Ben Shahn, 1942

Lidice was a Czech mining village that was obliterated by the Nazis in retaliation for the 1942 shooting of a Nazi official by two Czechs. All men of the village were killed in a 10-hour massacre; the women and children were sent to concentration camps. The destruction of Lidice became a symbol for the brutality of Nazi occupation during World War II

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-245)

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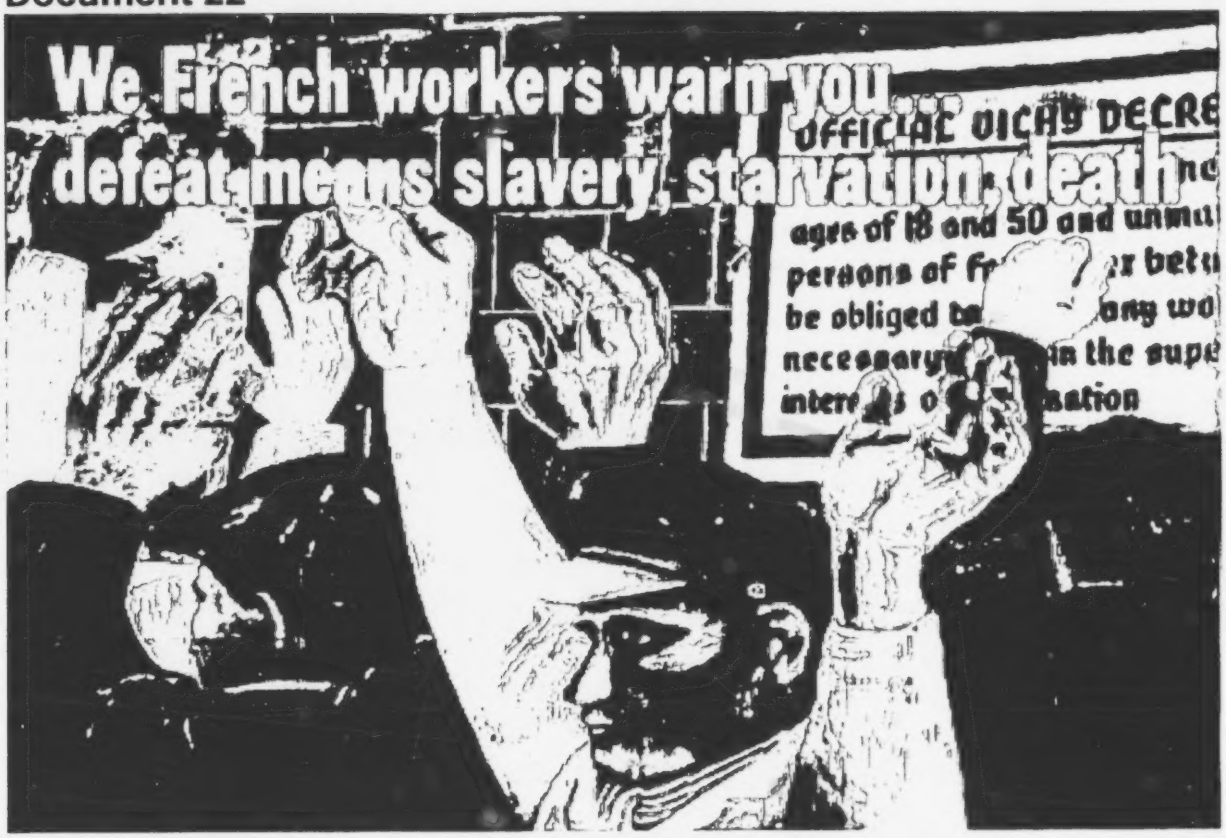
Document 22



We French Workers Warn You...

by Ben Shahn, 1942

Printed by the Government Printing Office
for the War Information Board
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-246)

National Archives and Records Administration

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Document 23

The Sowers

by Thomas Hart Benton, 1942

NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-1966)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 24

He's Watching You

By Glenn Grohe, ca. 1942

Concerns about national security intensify in wartime. During World War II, the Government alerted citizens to the presence of enemy spies and saboteurs lurking just below the surface of American society. "Careless talk" posters warned people that small snippets of information regarding troop movements or other logistical details would be useful to the enemy. Well-meaning citizens could easily compromise national security and soldiers' safety with careless talk.

Gouache on cardboard - NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-AOP-119)

National Archives and Records Administration

Document 25

Someone Talked!

by Siebel, 1942

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-230)

Document 26

. . . Because Somebody Talked!

by Wesley, 1943

Printed by the Government Printing Office for the Office of War Information
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-227A)

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Document 27

Wanted! For Murder

by Victor Keppler, 1944

A woman--someone who could resemble the viewer`s neighbor, sister, wife, or daughter--was shown on a "wanted" poster as an unwitting murderess.

At least one viewer voiced objection to the choice of a female model. A letter from a resident of Hawaii to the Office of War Information reads, in part, "American women who are knitting, rolling bandages, working long hours at war jobs and then carrying on with `women`s work` at home--in short, taking over the countless drab duties to which no salary and no glory are attached, resent these unwarranted and presumptuous accusations which have no basis in fact, but from the time-worn gags of newspaper funny men." NARA Still Picture Branch

NARA Still Picture Branch (NWDNS-208-PMP-91)

Document 28

You Talk of Sacrifice...He Knew the Meaning of Sacrifice!

Produced by Winchester NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-179-WP-1386)

National Archives and Records Administration

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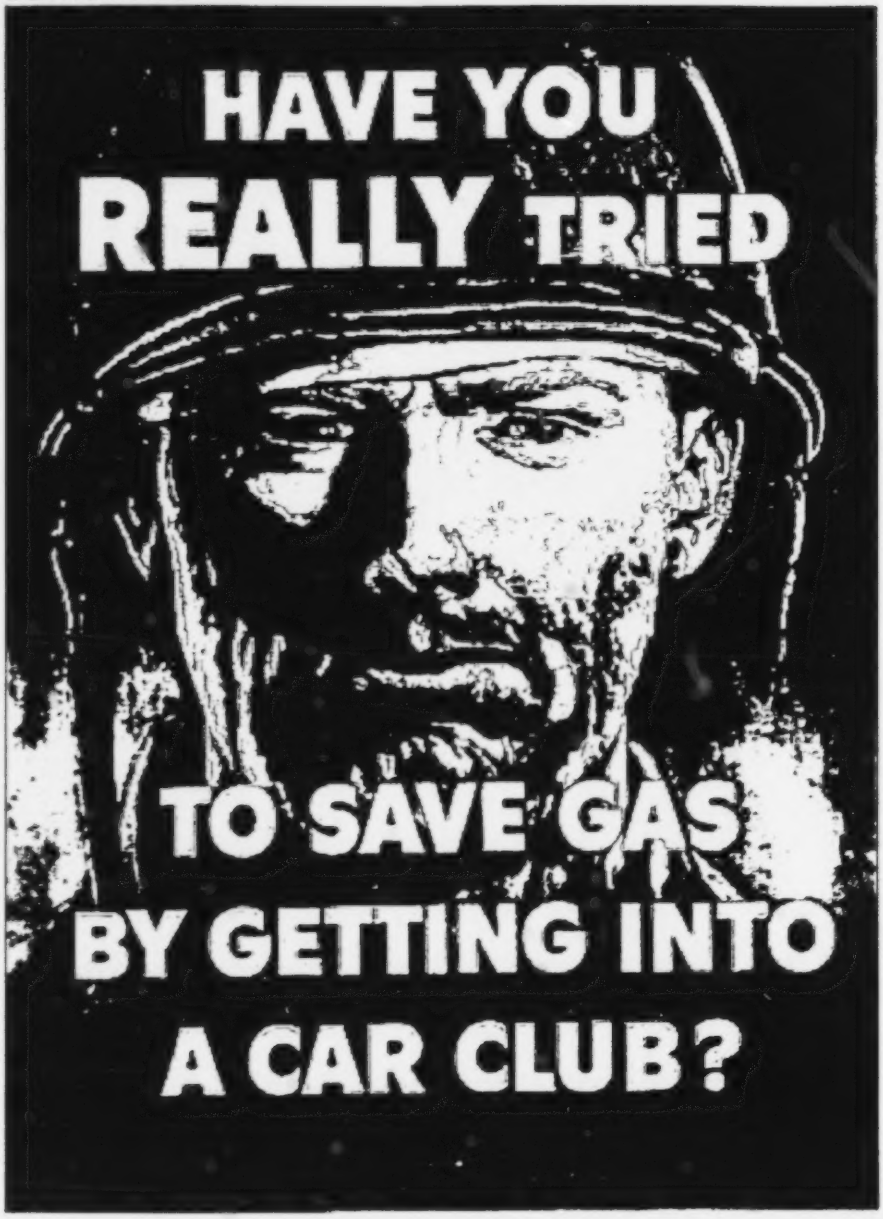
Document 29



Have You Really Tried to Save Gas
by Getting Into a Car Club?

By Harold Von Schmidt, 1944

Printed by the Government Printing Office
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-200(S)-PSC-16)

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Document 30

Miles of Hell to Tokyo!

By Amos Sewell, 1945

Printed by tthe Government Printing Office
for the War Manpower Commission
NARA Civil Reference Branch
(208-PMP-45)

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Document 31

Stamp 'Em Out!

Produced by RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc.
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-44-PA-1795)

National Archives and Records Administration

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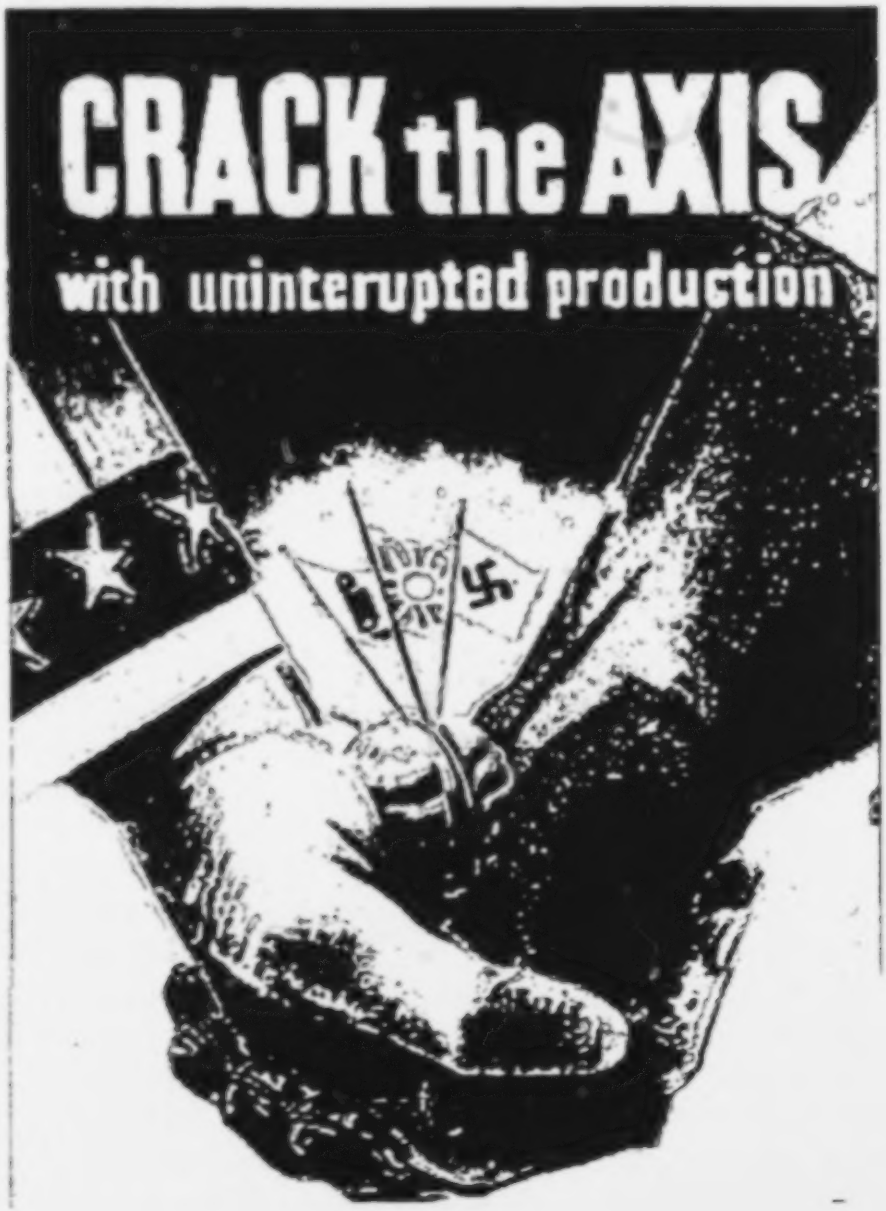
Document 32



Crack the Axis

by Charles Allen

Pastel and gouache on illustration board
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-B-5-12)

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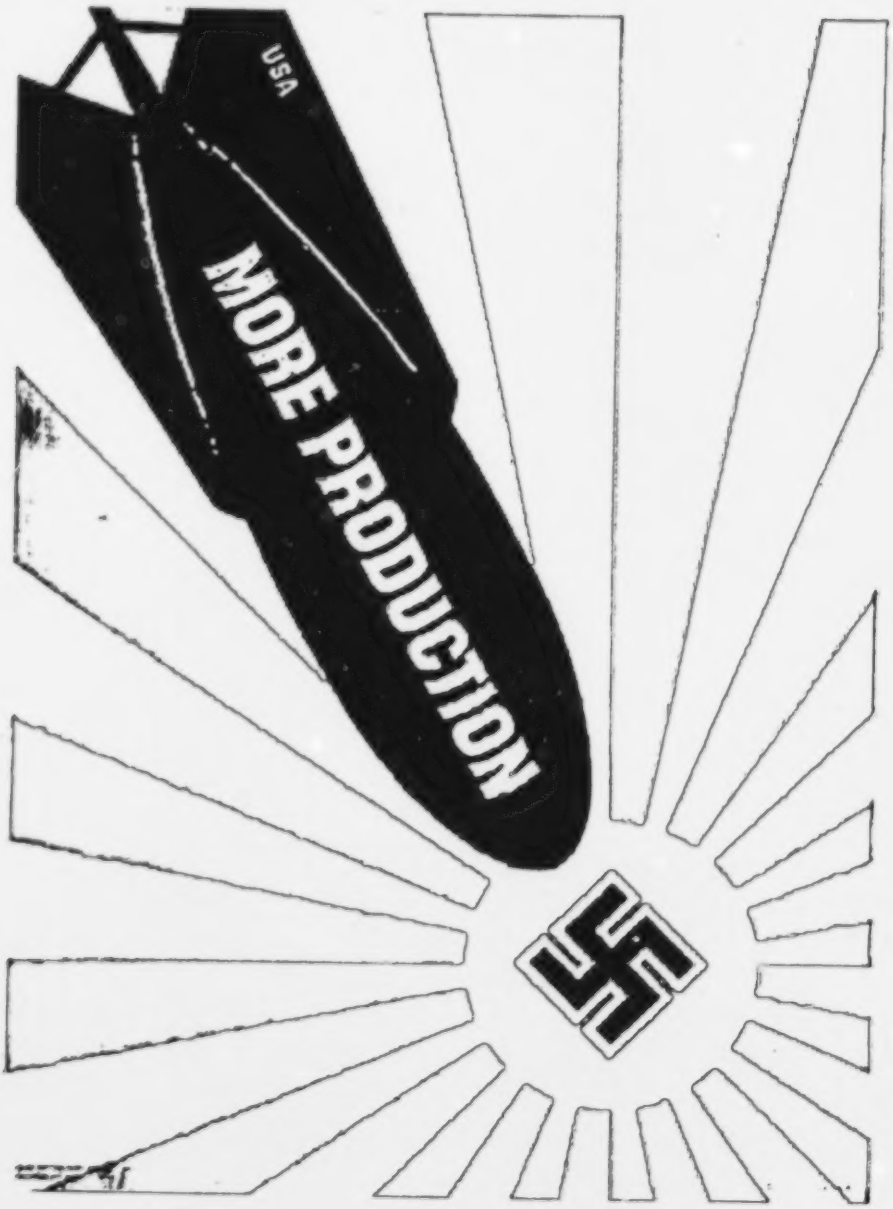
Document 33



More Production

by Zudor

Printed by the Government Printing Office
for the War Production Board
NARA Still Picture Branch
(NWDNS-208-PMP-129)

Poster Analysis Worksheet

1. What are the main colors used in the poster?

   _____

2. What symbols (if any) are used in the poster?

   _____

3. If a symbol is used, is it

   a. clear (easy to interpret)? _____
   b. memorable? _____
   c. dramatic? _____

4. Are the messages in the poster primarily visual, verbal, or both?

   _____

5. Who do you think is the intended audience for the poster?

   _____

6. What does the Government hope the audience will do?

   _____

7. What Government purpose(s) is served by the poster?

   _____

8. The most effective posters use symbols that are unusual, simple, and direct. Is this an effective poster?

   _____

Designed and developed by the
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408.

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